

General Meetings are held on the **second Thursday** of the month at 2.00pm
at Christ Church, 164 New London Road, Chelmsford CM2 0AW

General Meeting Speakers

Thursday 8th October 2026 2:00pm – Bobbie Darbyshire - A Beginning, A Muddle & An End: Where Do Novelists Get Their Ideas? In her very popular talk, entertaining speaker Bobbie Darbyshire will draw on the experience of many well-known authors to reveal how the fictional world arrives in a novelist's mind. Whether you read fiction or nonfiction or rarely open a book, sit back, enjoy, and ready yourselves for quite a few chuckles and laughs.

Thursday 12th November 2026 2:00pm – Amanda Sutherland - Creative Hypnotherapy

Thursday 10th and Tuesday 15th December - Cribs, Cards and Christingles' Mark Lewis explores Christmas folklore and traditions

View from the Chair



The September members' meeting was very well attended and had over eighty members. Thank you all for coming along, despite a few hiccups at the start. Andrew Baker gave an amusing talk and his take on how the sixties influenced our society of today.

I heard one member say it was one of the most interesting subjects and how much they enjoyed it. Many thanks to Anne and George for the teas and biscuits.

I would like to remind all members to ensure their data on our Beacon system is up to date including telephone numbers, addresses, emergency contacts. It is important to ensure your data is correct should we have the need to contact your emergency phone number. If you have any amendments, please notify your group leader who will either update Beacon or inform the relevant person.

Our present membership level has increased again, We are at 841 and as I have already mentioned it is important that we continue to attract new members as this gives us the opportunity to start new activities. Again, I would encourage you all to keep spreading the word about us and steer people to our website at <https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/>.

We are looking for your help. The sound system we use at our members' meetings has its limitations and members are still having trouble hearing us. To that end we are looking to purchase a sound system with

speakers and headsets, if anyone has expertise in this area and would like to advise our Committee on what are the best options we would appreciate it. If you would like to help, please contact me at alan.caddy@btinternet.com or any Committee member your help would be most welcomed.

At next year's AGM a few members of our Committee will be stepping down having completed their time. This will create vacancies and offer opportunities to join the Committee. If you want to find out more about how our Committee works and would be interested in a role, please contact me at alan.caddy@btinternet.com or any Committee member. If you are interested in attending our next Committee meeting as an observer, it is on Wednesday 28th October, at 10-00 am in room 2 at Christchurch, London Road.

Significant events from September 1926

On September 8th 1926, League of Nations Assembly voted unanimously to admit Germany.

On September 20th, 1926, Bugs Moran attempted to assassinate Al Capone in a drive by shooting, but failed.

On September 28th 1926, Russia and Latvia signed a treaty of neutrality.

Alan Caddy

**Did you previously work for Chelmsford Star Co-Op?
If so please see page 19**

All Day Walking Group Leader: Berry Cornell

This Group has been established for many years now, walking around 5 to 8 miles and ordinarily taking a picnic lunch and sometimes finishing at a coffee shop. The walks frequently alight upon interesting things, buildings, notable sights or sites etc.

The walks are sometimes local, sometimes further afield. In recent years walks have been taken in Sudbury, Witham, Saffron Walden, Maldon, Wivenhoe, Colchester, Mistley and many others, some accessed by car, others by train. The group also walks in London, catching the first off peak train at Chelmsford, rendezvousing with those who might get on at a different station. The September walk was in and around Broomfield finishing at the Church while our next walk, October, is planned to be in Little Hallingbury.



Walks take place on the second Monday in the month. Walk details are currently circulated via email and there is a WhatsApp group too to share key information and photos.

If you are interested in joining the Group, or trying it out, please get in touch with the Group Leader, Berry Cornell, via the Chelmsford u3a website.

Criminology

The proposed new criminology group has sparked a lot of interest. We are in the process of setting up our first meeting. At that meeting we will decide the frequency of all our meetings. Although we have lots of potential members we have not yet reached the point where we are at maximum capacity, so if you are interested, I repeat the original advert below for the group which was published in last month's newsletter.



There is an ever-growing interest in crime. This is evidenced by the increasing amount of media attention devoted to criminogenic news stories and the law and order challenges facing our new Prime Minister. Additionally, more and more TV programmes feature compelling drama all about crime and crime fighting agencies.

If there is enough interest, I propose to set up a Criminology group. This will not be a dull academic study of crime, but we will try to get inside actual crimes and inside the minds of criminals and crime fighters.

There is a vast range of potential activities and discussions we might cover. We could revisit old cases to determine if the guilty finding was sound (with a nod to the Thursday Murder Club). We may set up our own appeal court with members taking on the roles of jurors, lawyers, and judges. Let's attempt a bit of criminal profiling as pioneered by the FBI at Quantico.

There is an on-going debate about bringing back hanging. We would not dodge this difficult issue. There are many opportunities to explore hangings and executioners from our past.

We would not just be a discussion group. Visits would be an important part of group activities. There are many potential places to attract us, Crown, Magistrates and Coroners courts, museums of crime, prisons, victim support, probation, the Old Bailey.

We might have a lot of fun looking at various crime writers and TV/Film crime stories to determine their credibility.

The emphasis will be on having fun, learning new things, and taking in new experiences.

If this appeals to your inner Sherlock Holmes, please email me to express your interest. My email address is ljwhitehouse@mail.com

Lindsay Whitehouse

London - The City & its People Group

Leader: Berry Cornell

If you would like to join the London Group please contact the membership secretary Chris Rycroft for further information: Tel no. 01245 473047 email: c.rycroft123@btinternet.com. The Group **usually** meets up on 4th Monday of the month at 2pm but **dates in bold** are exceptions due to Bank holidays, Christmas and availability. Meetings are held at Christ Church, New London Road, Chelmsford.

Londinium A.D.250: Members of the London Group had a very interesting visit to a Roman Bathhouse in London in September. We entered through an apparently unremarkable office building and descended into the basement to view the site of a Billingsgate Roman House and Baths. An amazing piece of history! If you

would be interested in going or for more information, please visit – thecityofldn.com/billingsgate website or email: billingsgatebathhouse@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Our future programme now reads:

26th Oct Talk - London's Underground part II - speaker Tony Tuckwell
23rd Nov Talk - Historic Spitalfields – speaker Richard Pusey
14th Dec Film - Passport to Pimlico and refreshments

2027 will be the London Group's 20th anniversary and we are planning a very interesting year of talks, entertainment and visits. Visits will be by train or coach and include the new Museum of London, Westminster Abbey to hear the Purcell Club choral group, a guided tour of St. Pauls and hopefully the Thames Barrier. **For details of how to join if you are not already a member of our thriving group, please see above.**

Committee: Berry Cornell Convenor 01277 355823, Susie Fowkes, Chris Rycroft, David Marsh, Dave Sayers, Bob Smith Deputy Convenor.

Strolling and Exploring Group

Leader: Chris Purse



See page 13 for a report of our walk on September 18th

Our group is open to new members:

- Most of our walks will be in Chelmsford, but we may go further afield in future.
- Distances vary, typically two or three miles and no more than five, with a turnaround/bail-out point for anyone who wants to shorten the distance.
- We plan and check routes on footpaths with good surfaces, avoiding steps and stiles where possible. When that isn't possible, we give notice in advance.
- We usually start at Chelmsford Cathedral and finish at a café for a chat.
- Even though the start and finish points may vary, they are usually close together and near public transport and parking.

Looking forward to seeing you strolling and exploring — please note the walks are limited to a maximum of fifteen people.

Upcoming walks:

October 16th 10.30 A Neolithic and Bronze Age fort, a Saxon cemetery and a giant arrowhead (or Spear)

November 13th 10.30 Crompton , Marconi, a Russian cannon captured in the Crimean war and the museum.

December 11th 10.30 The artwork installations of Newlands Spring

January 8th 10.30 Great Baddow radar tower.

February 12th 10.30. Danbury (or Danebury).

Wonder of Words

Leader: Lindsay Whitehouse

We were almost at full strength for our September meeting. We trialled a new venue, which we greatly enjoyed. It was as close to being a perfect venue as it's possible to find in the centre of Chelmsford.

We have completed our audio project now. We had lots of fun writing it, but we will not turn it into a production. If a future drama group becomes active, we will happily give them the script to use. We will attempt to write another audio play in 2027.

Our fun with words challenge this month seemed at first sight to be impossible. We split into groups of three with each person writing a two-sentence story in isolation of each other. The group was then required to take all three two sentence stories and combine them into a coherent single story, but they could only add one more sentence in completing this task. I told you it seemed impossible.

In the event we had loads of fun with this, so much so that we intend to repeat it at a future meeting.

In preparation for our main writing task our discussion was around secrets. This resulted in a deep discussion that, at times, tugged on the heart strings a little. Consequently, we did not have much time to write a story about a secret. We may complete it as our voluntary homework.

If the idea of having fun with words, mixed in with a good discussion, and the occasional team game then this is the group for you. Please click on the contact icon on the website to get in touch

Lindsay Whitehouse Group Leader



Spanish Conversation Group

Leader: David Gout

Seven of us gathered on Wednesday, 16th September 2026 for our regular monthly meeting.

One of our members had visited a café in Takeley called The Polo Club, simply to have coffee and a piece of cake, but to his surprise taking place there was a carriage racing competition, which turned out to be very watchable. The late Duke of Edinburgh was a great enthusiast of the sport. One of the participants this time was the daughter of the current Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh!

Another member had attended a music concert that took place in Chelmsford Cathedral. The music played included memorable themes from films such as Jurassic Park, Jaws and Star Wars.

There always seems to be somebody in our group who has been abroad, and this month one member had been to Portugal (near the Spanish border) and another to Sicily.

Unfortunately, his holiday was spoilt by an inability to get home! As well as the well-publicised problems with our air traffic control systems, Mount Etna decided to have a spurt of activity, because of which Catania Airport was closed for 24 hours! He and his wife had to spend an extra night in a hotel there!

Later discussions in our group were about which sports we liked to watch on TV; what sort of books we read; and entertaining children!

If you can hold a basic conversation in Spanish and would like to come to our meetings, please click the link to our website. Whatever your ability, participating in our meetings will give you the confidence to speak and understand Spanish. The next meeting for the group will be on Wednesday 21st October 2026 at 10:30am at Room 2, Christ Church, New London Road, Chelmsford.

David Gout

Church Visiting Group

Group Leader: Brian Greatrex, Administrator: Michael Gray

September 2nd London – St Vedast and St Mary le Bow

We met Alison Woollard, our own expert guide, in New Change Gardens, just across from St Vedast and its prominent Hawksmoor spire, for an introductory talk. In changeable autumn weather, we moved to the corner of Foster Lane.

“Why build a church so close to a Cathedral ?” someone asked. Alison asked us to imagine the scene before the Great Fire, populating the streets with a dozen or more churches visible, each with its own parish, the centre of its own little community. French expats at St Vedast, it’s thought, since he was a French saint.

Founded in the 13th century, destroyed in the Great Fire. Rebuilt. Badly damaged in the Blitz, rebuilt by Dykes Bower.

Our exploration began in the Courtyard, with its huge acer, its Parish Room, its Rectory, its cuneiform tablet and its Roman pavement.



Inside, elegant collegiate pews, and many features rescued from other churches: the sword rest from St Anne and St Agnes, the communion rail from St Christopher le Stocks.

Then along Cheapside, to admire the complicated tower, Antwerp inspired, of Wren's St Mary-le-Bow. Its bells are a marker of Cockney identity, its door the measuring point for the London to Lewes road. It is a political statement building, and another survivor. Founded by Lanfranc in 1080, swept away by a tornado in 1091, one of the first to be rebuilt after the Great Fire, gutted in the blitz, though the tower proudly survived, and rebuilt in 1941 by Laurence King, though the famous bells were not re-hung for another twenty years.



The impressive interior boasts two pulpits, the Old Testament and the New, a crypt and a wine bar beneath. Rood Cross and stained-glass windows by John Hayward, Our Lady with the church in her lap, and many lesser spires of other City churches.

We are most grateful to Alison for preparing and leading this fascinating exploration of two contrasting buildings. St Vedast alias Foster, tucked away down Foster Lane, obscured by its neighbours, patched up on the cheap- and St Mary le Bow, prominently placed on Cheapside the processional route between Westminster and the City. A calling card for Sir Christopher with an unmissable flamboyant tower.

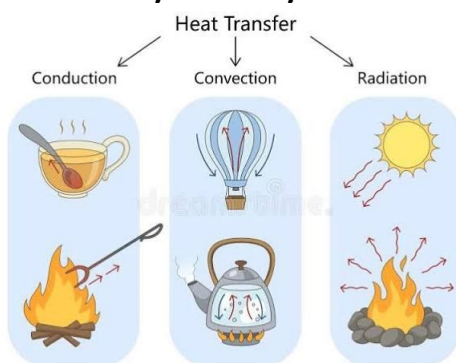
Our final visit, on October 7, takes us to St Alban Coopersale and All Saints Epping Upland.

Science Group

Leader: Chris Bellamy chrisallenbellamy@btinternet.com

Deputy: Paul Chaplin paulchaplin@talktalk.net

Thursday 25th October Thermodynamics by David Hall



Science Group talks are held in the Catholic Church Hall in Melbourne Avenue, Chelmsford CM1 2DU. Doors open at 1.30pm and the talks start at 2.15pm. Tea/Coffee before the talk. **Non-members of the Science group are welcome. £2 for non-members.**

Chelmsford Science and Engineering Society
The Common Cold: 30,000 Years Of The Sniffles
21st October 2026, 19:00 Anglia Ruskin University

Everybody knows what a cold feels like: miserable. The first cold virus was detected in a milk tooth shed over 30,000 years ago and, ever since, the common cold has been a bane.

by David Miles an infectious disease immunologist who teaches at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Local History Group

Leader: Jane Humphreys 01245 259590

For our September talk we welcomed back Lindsay Whitehouse who introduced us to William Calcraft, the Essex Executioner. In Victorian England Calcraft was the famous hangman, though his fame did not apparently extend to his home town of Chelmsford. Lindsay set out why this might be so.

William Calcraft was born in October 1800 in Little Baddow, the eldest of 12 children of a cobbler. He learnt his father's trade and attended the Methodist Sunday School but decided to try his luck in London. There he progressed from being a nightwatchman in a brewery (not sure what the Methodists made of that) via being a butler to being a hawker. His specialty was selling pies outside Newgate Gaol when the crowds gathered to view a hanging. James Foxton, the London hangman, liked the pies and offered Calcraft a job. Foxton taught Calcraft his craft quickly and when there was an urgent need for a hangman in Lincoln Calcraft was encouraged to apply. Within 7 days he had hung his first 2 people to the acclaim of the Lincoln public.

In 1824 William married Louisa Kingsbury in his home village of Little Baddow. He would have been well known in Chelmsford. There were 45 hangings at Chelmsford gaol of which Calcraft carried out at least 17. As executions were typically crowd-pleasers, why was our local executioner, who carried out over 450 in 45 years (more than anyone else), not feted and remembered? Perhaps it was because on Christmas Eve 1830 he hung an innocent man. James Ewen was caught up in the Captain Swing riots where farmworkers set fires to protest against landowners introducing farm machinery. James was at home in bed when a fire was spotted at Rayleigh, and he rushed to help put it out. Unfortunately for him he had been seen talking to one of those involved who turned out to be a bounty hunter and successfully pinned the blame on James. A sign that James Ewen was known to be innocent was that he was buried inside the prison – bodies of murderers were donated to medical research.

Calcraft understood how to kill quickly, but also how to put on a show. His fame led him to travel all over the country to carry out his craft. Locally in London he would charge a guinea a hanging, while elsewhere he would negotiate a fee typically of £10. He was entitled to the possessions of the hanged person which he sold. He also had an allowance to buy two ropes for each execution and would sell the unused rope in 1" portions (hence the phrase 'money for old rope'). He was still active in 1871 when the census catches him at Bedford gaol as 'the public executioner'. Calcraft and his wife lived peacefully in Hoxton where he told the census recorder he was a shoemaker. He enjoyed hiking in Epping Forest, breeding rabbits, angling, and keeping pigeons. He died in 1879 aged 79.

As a follow-up to last February's talk we will be visiting the Moot Hall Maldon on Tuesday 6th October. For more information please contact Nick Bailey nickbailey01245@outlook.com or 07854 822225.

The last 3 items in our 2026 programme are:

6 th October	VISIT: Moot Hall, Maldon	
3 rd November	The Mildmay Almshouses	Roger Louth
1 st December	Sir Richard Rich	Paul Stevens

Visitors are welcome to meetings, held at Boreham Village Hall starting at 2.15pm, for £3.

Jane Humphreys

Essex Branch of the Historical Association
The Social Spread of the Handshake in 18th & 19th Century England.

By Dr Penelope Corfield Emeritus Prof. History, Royal Holloway.

2.30pm Saturday 17th October at Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford CM1 2XB.

Visitors and prospective members warmly welcomed – £5. Booking not required

See <https://essexbranchha.com/> for more information

Book Group

Leader: Andy Moir

At our September meeting we discussed *The Guardian of Lies* by Kate Furnivall. The novel is a Cold War espionage thriller set in the South of France in 1953. The heroine, Eloïse Caussade, is a young woman who grew up on a farm in the Camargue, a marshy region of southern France, where her father raises bulls and horses. She has always hero-worshipped her older brother André, a spy for the CIA, and she has gone to Paris to follow in his footsteps. The CIA had turned her down and following that disappointment, she finds work at a detective agency, working for a female detective.

The novel opens with a thrilling car chase through the streets of Paris, with Eloïse driving André away from his pursuing enemies. Her car crashes, and her face is scarred as a result. André is even more severely injured. His legs are damaged, requiring him to walk on crutches. Soon André is rescued from his hospital bed and taken home to the family's farm in the Camargue, where Eloïse joins him.

The majority of the group really enjoyed the novel and said that they would like to read another novel by Kate Furniva;. However options as usual were divided...

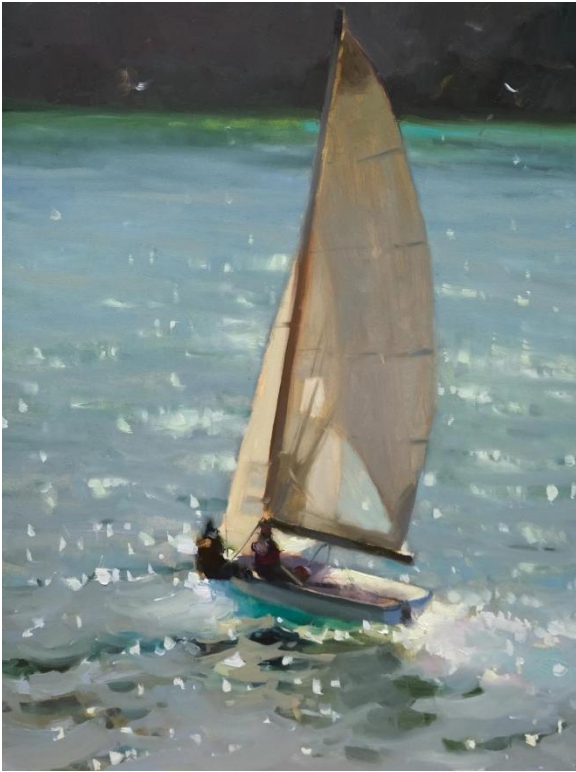
One member said "This book was spoilt for me by what I perceived as the author's carelessness or perhaps ineptitude in too many areas of her narrative..... when I read glaring inconsistencies as outlined, then, for me, the story loses any conviction and therefore loses my interest."."

However another members said "I really enjoyed the book full of pace, intrigue and character. I particularly was fascinated by the brother/sister relationship: trusting but curious, guilt and duty."

Another interesting and good natured meeting.

Our books for the next three meeting are:

Mon Oct 19 th	Go Set A Watchman by Harper Lee
Mon Nov 16 th	Hitler's Peace by Philip Kerr
Mon Dec 21 st	The List of Suspicious things by Jennie Godfrey



This month we journeyed to London to the Mall Galleries to see the Annual Exhibition of the Royal Society of Marine Artists. There was a fascinatingly large collection of paintings - oil, water colour, pastel - of every aspect of the sea and river as well as ceramics, bronzes, porcelain, stoneware, copper. and neon signs saying 'The Sea is always right'.

The pictures depicted water in various countries from London Bridges over the Thames to the Grand Canal in Venice - not to forget Japan. There were calm seas and beaches with children paddling to high rolling waves, from grand ships like the Queen Elizabeth in dock to sailing boats and racing yachts.

Fish were not forgotten - there were red mullet and mackerel as well as crabs and there were pictures of seagulls and gannets.

The large picture of a 'Beached Root' was fascinating in its detail, as were the pictures of sea shells.

There was a bronze dolphin, blue porcelain vase with fish, a copper fish and a ceramic shark to mention a few - quite a variety to choose from. A very interesting exhibition of the work of living artists from all parts of the country.



On Tuesday 27th October, we shall be having a lecture by Dr Alison Barker on 'Caravaggio: Art and Man' at Room 2, Christ Church, New London Road at 2.15 p.m.

Caravaggio is a fascinating subject and it will be very interesting to learn more about him.

Alison Barker is an excellent speaker for the Arts Society and WEA among others. Admission will be £5 (including tea and biscuits).

Garden Group

Group Leader: Karen Smallwood



This month the Garden Group visited Feeringbury Manor in Feering.

The land this house was built on was one owned by William the Conqueror and parts of the house date back to 1500.

It has now been in the loving hands of Sonia and Giles since 1978 and they have made considerable changes.

Throughout the garden there are specimen trees, a small orchard and large, colourful borders. The river Blackwater runs through the bottom of the this ten acre site.

Dotted throughout the garden are metal sculptures by artist Ben Coode-Adams.



There were sixteen of us this month and we all sat down to homemade cakes and tea.

Birding Group

Leader Alan Alexander 01245 248030 Mobile 07712 818499

On Friday 25th September twelve members of the group attended Abberton Reservoir, I was not able to attend, so I am grateful to Ann Goddard for this information.

It was a bright beautiful day. The Hide Bay was practically puddles and the reservoir was very depleted.

We saw Reed Bunting, Magpie, Wigeon, Mute Swan Coot, Pied Wagtail, Black tailed Godwit, Lapwing, Gadwall, Teal, Wood Pigeon, Meadow Pipit, Crow, Rook Cormorant, Grey Heron, Pochard, Black headed Gull, Common gull, Herring Gull, Lesser and Greater Black Backed Gull, Buzzard, Great Crested Grebe, Canada Goose, Robin, Mallard, Stonechat, Linnet, Goldfinch, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Ringed Plover, Pheasant, and Kestrel.



We heard but were unable to see Chiff Chaff and Cettis Warbler. Also seen, some beautiful clouded yellow butterflies

Our next meeting is due to be on **23rd October: Essex Wildlife Trust, Two Tree Island, Belton, Leigh on Sea SS9 2GB**. The land was reclaimed from the sea in the 18th century when a seawall was built around the saltmarsh and originally used for farming. Now managed as a nature reserve and just a stones throw away from Leigh-on-Sea, it is a firm favourite walking destination and a fantastic site for birdwatching. I will email members with full details nearer to the date.

New members are very welcome to join us, please feel free to contact me on the numbers above, or by the u3a website email address. We meet at 10 am on the fourth Friday of the month at the chosen venue and set off about ten minutes later. The walking is not arduous; we usually spend more time standing or sitting in hides enjoying the spectacle of nature. There is no fee to join the group, and **all abilities are more than welcome** whether an experienced birder or total novice. If members would like to be added to our growing WhatsApp Group, please let me know and give me your mobile number. As always, if any members have ideas or suggestions for visits, please let me know. I will send all members an email nearer the time confirming the location and that we can go ahead.

Reminder to Group Leaders
Please send copy for the November 2026 Newsletter to the editor, Andy Moir.
clem.moir@btinternet.com
All copy must arrive no later than Friday 30th October 2026.

Chelmsford u3a Committee

Position	Name
Chair	Alan Caddy
Vice Chair	John Burrow
Secretary	Sue Osbourn
Treasurer	Wendy Hubbard
Membership Secretary	Alan Mayo
Speaker Organiser/Deputy Treasurer	Eddie Wood 01245 601359
Newsletter Coordinator/Minutes Secretary	Lynn Regan
Groups Coordinator	Lesley Wood
Deputy Groups Coordinator & Printed Newsletter	Brian Littlechild
Marketing/Advertising	Mike Harmer
Monthly Meetings Organiser/Support Groups coordinator	Ann Goddard
Committee Member	Ann Bell
Committee Member	Susie Nankivell

Strolling and Exploring Group

Leader: Chris Purse

A walk along the river Chelmer

Eight U3A members met on 18 September at Chelmsford Cathedral for a three-mile walk along the River Chelmer. We exited the Cathedral into Tindal Square and admired the buildings around it and the statue of Judge Tindal, erected in 1850. The HSBC bank, whose rooftop has a style that to me looks Parisian, was originally the National Provincial Bank, built in 1919 as two separate banking premises sharing one facade — the join between them is still visible if you look closely. The stone front is treated in the classical manner: three bays divided by attached Corinthian columns on pedestals, a modillion cornice and a balustraded parapet topped with four ornamental urns, like sentries along the roofline. One of the urns has gone. We don't know whether it fell or was taken down for safety, though it would have caused serious damage if it had fallen. Ground-floor windows carry semi-circular heads with moulded archivolt, and the roof above is Cumberland slate with copper flashing. The branch later passed to Midland Bank, which was absorbed into HSBC, though the building is Grade II listed under its old title of "Part of Midland Bank."



The most impressive building in the square is the Shire Hall, at the top of the High Street. Built in 1791, it has recently been renovated. We were interviewed as part of a survey to decide its future use. Inside, we spent some time at an industrial heritage exhibition organised by Chelmsford Civic Society, covering some of Chelmsford's most important companies, including Marconi, Christy, Hoffmann's and Crompton, with products, brochures, manuals and staff quotes on display. Roy Perry recognised himself as an apprentice in one of the photographs.

From the Shire Hall we headed to the River Chelmer via Waterloo Lane. The building with the turret on the corner of New Street and Waterloo Lane is now home to a bespoke furniture and decor company and the Voodoo Kellar bar, but was the Old Police Station, a Grade II listed building. It's mainly early 20th-century, with an 18th-century south corner block, three storeys in brick with stone trim. Its south-west angle tower is a semi-hexagonal, open-sided turret with ionic columns and a stone cupola, rising through three storeys of tall sash windows, and the west front has a first-floor bow window with ionic detailing and a relief of the county arms. A tunnel reportedly runs from the police station to the Shire Hall's law courts. It would make a good feature to explore if it were opened for a future event.

We followed the river through the city, under the rusty new iron bridge, to the mural of Keith Harris and Orville in the B&M car park. We're still not sure why it's there or what the connection to Chelmsford is. We paused at Moulsham Mill for tea, coffee, cake and croissants; the quality of the food and drink was excellent, and I gave my flat white 4.5 out of 5, about as high as I'm prepared to go. We got the 10% group discount that was on offer.



Either side of the mill are spigot mortar emplacements that were manned by the Home Guard in the Second World War. They housed the "Blacker Bombard," a weapon designed by Lieutenant Colonel Stewart Blacker, developed from a 1930s design and adopted by the Home Guard after Dunkirk left Britain short of anti-tank guns. A shell slid onto a fixed steel spigot mounted on an inclined, swivelling frame with a trigger mechanism. The weapon also existed in a portable four-legged version, as well as the fixed emplacements seen here. Each fixed emplacement consisted of a circular or octagonal concrete pedestal, known as a "thimble," with a metal pintle at its centre, surrounded by a narrow pit that gave the crew some protection and let them traverse the weapon. The one by the café's outside seating has small trenches and ammunition lockers. Around 8,000 fixed emplacements are thought to have been issued nationally, typically sited along "stop-lines" at points of local tactical advantage.

After refreshments, we carried on along the riverbank to Barnes Lock, unfenced and fairly high, so take care not to fall in (dogs often do, mistaking the algae for grass). One bridge here gave us a view of the mill race and old mill house. From another, reached by retracing our steps past the lock, we saw the mill race's far end, in scenery that could pass for Monet or Constable country. We then pushed on into a meadow, followed the river upstream under the new bridge and the brick bridge, and carried on through the marina and around the car park back to the Riverside Leisure Centre for lunch.



Interest Groups List (as of 04/10/2026)

Group Leaders may be contacted by phone or by email via the relevant group page in our website
<https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/>

Name of Group	Day of Month	Time	Group Leader	Phone
All Day Walks	2 nd Monday		Berry Cornell	01277 355823
Art Appreciation	4 th Tuesday	14.00	Brenda Kelly	01277 840621
Art Club	Mondays	11.15	Peter Anderton	07773 074105
Art for Pleasure	Tuesdays	9.30	Les Cooper	07976 292362
Birding	4 th Friday	10.00	Alan Alexander	07712 818499
Book Group	3 rd Monday	14.30	Andy Moir	01245 440007
Bookworms	1 st Thursday	14.20	Marian Jenkins	07986 616748
Bridge (beginners)	Tuesdays	14.00	Alan Cardus	07962407748
Bus Pass Group	2 nd Friday	varies	Maurice Austin	01245 492328
Canasta/Card Games	1 st & 3 rd Monday	13.30	Julie Haggard	07511 629563
Criminology	2 ND Monday	10-30	<i>Lindsey Whitehouse</i>	01245 356363
Choir Group	1 st & 3 rd Wednesday	14:00	Deborah Aloba	07940 384785
Church Visits	1 st Wednesday	10.15	Brian Greatrex	01245 258833
Coach Outings	Various		Malcolm Lonsdale	07849269397
Cycling for Fun	2 nd Fri, 4 th Tues	varies	Tony Cox	077588 17569
Criminology	2 nd Monday	10.30	Lindsay Whitehouse	01245 256363
Discussion Group	2 nd Tuesday	13.00	Brian Littlechild	07860 826204
Family History	4 th Friday	14.00	Lesley Wood	01245 601359
Fishing Group	Wednesdays		Alan Caddy	07894 702913
French Conversation	2 nd & 4 th Wed	14.00	David Hall	01245 284409
French Beginners	1 st Friday	10.30	Andrew Dronsfield	07940 388393
Garden Group	4 th Thursday	14.00	Chris Bellamy	01277 353481
IT group	2 nd Wednesday	10.00		
International Dining	3 rd Monday	19.00	Jennie Cappin	01245 358629
Jazz and Blues	3 rd Wednesday	10.30	Heinz Kassier	07843 800455
Local History	1 st Tuesday	14.15	Jane Humphreys	01245 259590
London City and its People	4 th Monday	14.00	Berry Cornell	01277 355823
Lunch Club 1	Last Friday	12.30	John Heathcote	01245 380766
Lunch Club 3	1 st Thursday	12.30	Laraine Linard & Barbara Childs	07855 312752
Lunch Club 4	2 nd Wednesday	12.30	Val Norfolk	07500 444518
Mah-Jong	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday	14.00	Chris Paget	01245 474811
Motorcycle	4 th Wednesday		Dave Lambert	07908 895437

Name of Group	Day of Month	Time	Group Leader	Phone
Philosophy	Thurs 4-weekly	11.00	Julia McClure	07941 480240
Philosophy & Religion	1 st Monday	10.00	Jim Mackay	07452 988260
Philosophy & Religion 2	4 th Wednesday	14.00	Jim Mackay	07452 988260
Photos on Face Book	Online		Alan Mayo	07979 540053
Pickleball Monday	Monday weekly	13.45	Gillian Stimson	07856 203630
Pickleball Tuesday	Tuesday weekly	15.00	Jayne Hughes	01245 495151
Pickleball Thursday	Thursday weekly	12.00	Neil Carroll	07964 386056
Poetry Appreciation	2 nd Wednesday	14.00	Judith Boniface	01245 266316
Quiz	4 th Thursday	10.00	Laraine Linard	07855 312752
Rock & Pop Appreciation	2 nd Wednesday	15.00	Bruce Knight	07963 592328
Science Group	3 rd Thursday	13.45	Chris Bellamy	01277 353481
Sewing, Knitting &	3 rd Thursday	11.00	Jacqui Norfolk	07714 258517
Short Walks	3 rd Friday	10.00	Robert Lloyd	01245 466167
Strolling & Exploring Walk	2 nd Friday of month	Flexible	Chris Purse	07484 121911
Spanish Conversation	3 rd Wednesday	10.30	David Gout	01245 268923
Summer Evening Walks	4 th Wednesday	16.30	Alan Mayo	07979 540053
Sunday Lunch 1	1 st Sunday	varies	John Tritton	07800 964652
Sunday Lunch 2	3 rd Sunday	varies	Lesley Wood	01245 601359
Tai Chi	Tuesdays	14.00	Alan Caddy	07894 702913
Ten Pin Bowling	2 nd & 4 th Fridays	10.30	Roger & Ruth Spall	01245 466486
Textiles (Fun with)	3 rd Monday	11.15	Chris McFarland	01245 263112
Theatre Outings	As and when		Lesley Wood	01245 601359
The Wonder of Words	3 rd Wednesday	14.00	Lindsay Whitehouse	01245 356363
Travel Group	See website		Anne Brereton	07710411418
Ukulele	Friday 10 July	2 pm	Alan Caddy	07894 702913
Walking Group	1 st & 3 rd Fridays	10.00	Alan Mayo	07979 540053
WYBIG	As & when		Mark Foster	07531 726417

Contact Groups Coordinator: Lesley Wood, lesleywood54@yahoo.com

Events in October 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
11:15 am: Art Club	9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		11:00 am: Philosophy 2	9:45 am: Walking Group		12:00 pm: Sunday lunch Group 1
1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday	2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)		12:00 pm: Lunch Club 3	10:30 am: French (Beginners)		
2:00 pm: London: the City and its People Group	2:00 pm: Tai Chi		12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday	2:00 pm: ukulele		
	3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday		2:30 pm: Book Worms			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10:00 am: Philosophy & Religion	9:30 am: Art for Pleasure	7:00 am: Fishing	12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday	Bus Pass Group		
11:15 am: Art Club	2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)	10:30 am: Church Visits	2:00 pm: Monthly Meeting	10:00 am: Cycling for Fun		
1:30 pm: Canasta/Card Games	2:00 pm: Local History	2:00 pm: Poetry		10:30 am: Ten Pin Bowling		
1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday	2:00 pm: Mah-Jong			2:00 pm: ukulele		
	2:00 pm: Tai Chi					
	3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday					
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
All day Walks	9:30 am: Art for Pleasure	10:00 am: IT Group	10:00 am: Sewing and Crochet	9:45 am: Walking Group		12:00 pm: Sunday lunch Group 2
11:15 am: Art Club	2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)	12:30 pm: Lunch Club 4	12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday	10:00 am: Short Walks		
1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday	2:00 pm: Discussion Group	2:00 pm: French Conversation	2:15 pm: Science Group	10:30 am: Strolling & Exploring Group		
	2:00 pm: Tai Chi	3:00 pm: Rock & Pop Appreciation		2:00 pm: ukulele		
	3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday					

	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	👤 11:15 am: Art Club 👤 1:30 pm: Canasta/Card Games 👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday 👤 2:30 pm: Book Group 👤 3:00 pm: Fun with Textiles 👤 7:00 pm: International Dining	👤 Mah-Jong 👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure 👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners) 👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi 👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday	👤 Craft and Chat 👤 10:30 am: Jazz and Blues Group 👤 10:30 am: Spanish Conversation 👤 2:00 pm: Wonder of Words	👤 10:00 am: Quiz Group 👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday 👤 2:00 pm: Garden Group	👤 Motorcycle 👤 10:00 am: Birding 👤 10:30 am: Ten Pin Bowling 👤 12:30 pm: Luncheon Group 1 👤 2:00 pm: Family History 👤 2:00 pm: ukulele		
	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
	👤 11:15 am: Art Club 👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday 👤 2:00 pm: London: the City and its People Group	👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure 👤 10:00 am: Cycling for Fun 👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners) 👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi 👤 2:30 pm: Art Appreciation 👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday	👤 2:00 pm: French Conversation 👤 2:00 pm: Philosophy & Religion 2	👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday	👤 2:00 pm: ukulele		👤 12:00 pm: Sunday lunch Group 1

Our COOP news!

Are you an Our COOP (formerly Chelmsford Star Co-Op) member?

If so, we have two exciting activities going on for you.

*** Let's Reconnect! ***

If you previously worked for Chelmsford Star Co-Op, Our COOP would like to reconnect with you. They are creating a friendly network for retired employees and planning an annual reunion filled with memories, laughter and familiar faces.

If you are interested, please contact:

Mandy Dutton

mandy.dutton@centralcoop.co.uk

07596 707642

*** Our COOP Members Coffee Mornings ***

*All Our COOP members (formerly Chelmsford Star Co-Op) are welcome to meet up with fellow members every other Monday at **Acanteen** in Chelmsford from 10 am to Midday*

Upcoming dates are:

12th October

26th October

9th November

23rd November

7th December

21st December

There will be fun activities, interesting speakers and the chance to catch up with friends old and new.

*You can find **Acanteen** at:*

35 New London Rd, Chelmsford CM2 0ND

(opposite the side entrance of the Marks & Spencer Food Hall)

No need to book.

**Let's celebrate the friendships that made
Chelmsford Star so special**